

Appendix C : Management response to: Internal Audit report on Landlord Health and Safety

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1. Summary:

Melton Borough Council is a registered provider for housing and has an obligation to act to ensure all 1835 homes where their tenants live are safe. The safety of tenants is a paramount consideration but the Council also has an aspiration to deliver high quality homes and housing services.

In January 2019, landlord health and safety compliance was added to the Corporate Risk Register and approval was sought from the Corporate Committee for the permanent establishment of a full time Compliance Officer post within the Housing and Corporate Assets team.

Following the issues identified by officers related to fire safety, this internal audit review and report was requested by the Senior Leadership Team as it was recognised that issues in one area of compliance could be symptomatic of wider issues and assurance was required for compliance of all areas of landlord health and safety including fire safety, water hygiene, gas safety, electrical safety and asbestos safety.

In parallel to this, the Council has been working closely with tenants forum and Cabinet members in creating a comprehensive Housing Improvement Plan (HIP) that identifies a range of actions for improving property compliance and customer experience of the Council's landlord and housing service. This plan was approved by the Council on 4th November and is now being implemented.

While compliance is a key focus of the HIP, the actions proposed as part of the HIP are wider than compliance and impact on all aspects of housing and tenant management. It is envisaged that implementation of the wider actions will have positive impact on managing compliance within housing assets.

The Council accepts all recommendations and findings of this audit report. In response to the findings of this report, the Council has informed the Social Housing Regulator of the current position and the immediate remedial actions being implemented to address the situation. The Council will work with the Regulator as part of ensuring the required improvements are delivered in a timely manner.

2. Response to recommendations:

All the issues and recommendations have been incorporated within the Housing Improvement Plan, however for completeness the specific issues and recommendations identified in the Audit report are set out below with the specific management response against each action.

Issue 1:

There are no policies on the electrical safety management or the gas safety of the Council's properties. There is a Legionella Management Policy available which is dated December 2018. The Asbestos Policy was approved in 2014 and is currently under review. However, both would benefit from a review to ensure they reflect current processes in place. Existing policies do not currently set out how inspection outcomes are monitored and addressed.

Recommendation 1:

The electrical safety management policy as well as the gas safety policy should be designed to set out the Council's approach in regards to the electrical safety of its properties. Policies and procedures in place regarding landlord health and safety responsibilities should be reviewed and updated in line with the recommendations made in this audit, especially in relation to the recording and compliance monitoring of inspection outcomes. The policies should also specify the inspection frequency in line with the statutory requirements, where applicable. *(to be linked with the 'Fixed Asset Policies' recommendation)*

Management Response:

The recommendation is agreed.

The existing current policies will be updated and new policies will be created in line with Government guidance and statutory requirements. Following the creation and unsuccessful recruitment to the new Compliance officer post earlier this year, it is currently being re-evaluated in order to commence recruitment in November 2019. While the audit report identifies this as a low priority, it is understood that this will form the basis of formation of projects and their monitoring and hence needs to be prioritised. This role forms part of the much wider increase in resources set out within the HIP.

Through the immediate actions taken as a consequence of the findings of the audit, interim resources from across the organisation have been re-focussed to support this area with specific additional support now being provided by the Council's Health and Safety Officer.

The policy for each compliance area will identify and include guidance on the competency, qualifications and skill levels required for staff, managers, consultants and contractors appointed by the Council. This will inform the training requirements for staff and selection criteria for procurement. It will also outline the legislative guidance for each area of compliance and identify the actions to be taken, frequency of checks, monitoring mechanism as well as responsible and competent persons. Each policy will also identify the key messages for tenants and how they should be communicated.

The proposed policy framework will be prepared and approved by the Council by June 2020.

Issue 2:

A central record of training is not in place making it difficult to identify training needs of the housing and assets team. In order to ensure that health and safety checks are carried out appropriately, officers must be suitably qualified and continue to receive the appropriate training.

Recommendation 2:

To ensure that members of staff are suitably qualified, evidence of employee competence should be obtained at the recruitment stage. The Council should then maintain an active register of training relating to all in house staff that are involved in carrying out landlord's health and safety checks on all Council properties including housing stock. The register should be regularly updated and monitored to ensure all staff receive appropriate training.

Management Response:

The recommendation is agreed. The policy for each compliance area will identify and include guidance on the competency, qualifications and skill levels required for staff, managers, consultants and contractors appointed by the Council. This will inform the training requirements for staff and selection criteria for procurement.

To support the Compliance Officer post established in January 2019, as part of the HIP, new posts have been created for a an electrical officer and a mechanical officer in order to add technical capacity and competency within the team. Job descriptions and person specifications are being prepared for all new jobs proposed within the HIP and will include relevant competency levels and qualifications as part of that.

The Council does have a central register of training that currently does not include service specific requirements such as property safety compliance.

A record of essential training needs for staff members (as identified in the policy documents) in the housing assets and corporate assets teams will be created by March 2020 and will be monitored and updated on an annual basis by the service managers.

Issue 3:

Audit review on the sample of the Council's housing properties demonstrated that evidence of contractor competence was not available for a sample of contractors that undertook annual fire risk assessments, asbestos and legionella checks. Not being able to demonstrate the contractor competence to carry out health and safety inspections increases a risk of reputational damage to the Council and may also lead to harm to the Council's tenants.

Recommendation 3:

Ensure that evidence to demonstrate contractor competence is obtained prior to contractors undertaking any inspections/work on the Council's properties.

Management Response:

The recommendation is agreed.

The policy for each compliance area will identify and include guidance on the competency, qualifications and skill levels required for staff, managers, consultants and contractors appointed by the Council. This will inform the training requirements for staff and selection criteria for procurement. The question set contained with PAS 91 a standardised pre-qualification questionnaire developed by the British Standards Institute (BSI) to help the public sector buyers identify suitably qualified construction supply chain.

Where appropriate, established frameworks are being used to ensure due diligence is carried out appropriately.

Where open procurement is used, a check of competency will be carried out and a record will be maintained as part of the contract register. Legal team have amended the contract register to include a checkbox to ensure this has been captured.

Issue 4:

No guidance and advice on water safety could be found in the tenant's handbook or the tenancy agreement. Tenants should be informed on matters such as not to adjust the temperature setting of the calorifier, to regularly clean showerheads and notify the landlord if the hot water is not heating properly or there are any other problems with the system so that appropriate action can be taken.

Recommendation 4:

Tenant's handbook should include guidance and advice on water safety as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive.

Management Response:

The recommendation is agreed.

The current work to review and strengthen the Tenancy Agreements will be considered by Cabinet on 27th November 2019. Subject to and following Cabinet approval of the new draft, consultation with tenants will commence. The tenants' handbook will be revised following the approval of the new tenancy agreement as part of the consultation and engagement plan with tenants. Information related to all aspects of property safety will be included in an accessible format in the tenants' handbook which will be available in both print and digital format as well as online.

In addition, a comprehensive tenants engagement plan will be prepared for raising further awareness of the importance of compliance and safety in the Council homes. Considering that safety is the responsibility of everyone involved, awareness will be raised among the tenants, visitors and staff as well as TFEC members through a range of mediums including signage, tenants handbook, information on website and social media.

Issue 5:

There is no central record of all health and safety inspections carried out by property. Inspection records are currently recorded in a variety of ways. Evidence of checks such as electrical inspection certificates are held in the relevant network folders. Annual gas checks and fire risk assessments are recorded on the spreadsheet. No checks on asbestos are being carried out at this time, but some records on some previous surveys are held in the relevant network folders. This lack of consistency and oversight increases a risk of the Council's housing stock not being inspected in a timely matter and poses a challenge in tracking the progress of the inspections.

Recommendation 5:

All inspection records should be held centrally to ensure checks are undertaken in a timely manner and that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities as a landlord. The use of the housing management system should be explored to ascertain if it could be used in centralising all records and conducting effective monitoring.

Management Response:

The recommendation is agreed.

The Housing Improvement Plan acknowledges the importance of effective and efficient data management system. Officers are exploring to maximise the use of the current asset management software system and explore its functionality to manage compliance data. If it is found that the current data management system is not fit for purpose, consideration will be given to procuring a new asset management solution with greater functionality in the future.

Consultants and officers are currently undertaking a gap analysis of available information in order to inform the specification for commissioning the next stage of data collection.

The specification for a full stock condition survey is being prepared in order to commence procurement for a 2 year work programme which will complete the full database of all housing assets.

A Data Officer post for an initial 2 year period has been created as part of HIP, in support of the compliance and stock condition work.

Issue 6:

Audit testing reviewed a sample of single dwellings and housing blocks to establish if annual gas checks are carried out. No gas checks are required for communal blocks, except if communal heating is in place, and in one such instance a gas safety check was found to have been overdue at the time of the audit. The officers have now confirmed and provided evidence of the completed gas safety check.

Recommendation 6:

Ensure that annual gas safety checks are undertaken in a timely manner. Once a central register is established, any gaps in completion of annual gas inspections should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

Management Response:

The recommendation is agreed.

The Council will continue to undertake annual checks of all properties where gas supply is identified.

In addition, the Council has appointed consultants to undertake surveys of the remaining properties which are not on the annual rolling programme by the end of April 2020 to provide the Council with re-assurance that these properties still do not require gas safety checks and/or certificates and ensure its records are up-to-date and accurate.

This information will be added to the asset database and all actions identified through these surveys will be recorded and implemented with immediate effect.

Issue 7:

As above, sample testing identified a housing block which had not been subject to a gas safety inspection in the last twelve months. This had arisen following the completion of a project where handover arrangements had failed to account for the safety inspection and this had not been highlighted for action. This inspection was promptly completed once flagged to officers by Internal Audit but highlights the risk of failing to account for inspections in construction/refurbishment project handovers.

Recommendation 7:

Lessons should be learnt from this incident in improving inclusion of such checks in project handover arrangements and reviewing CDM provision.

Management Response:

The recommendation is agreed.

A CDM handbook for staff to use on daily basis has been prepared in October 2019. The handbook includes the provision for project handover the need for a comprehensive health and safety file that expressly includes statutory servicing intervals.

Issue 8:

There is currently no Council policy on electrical safety however the relevant UK standard for electrical safety advises on five yearly inspections. Audit testing reviewed a sample of single dwellings and housing blocks to establish if **five** yearly electrical inspections are carried out. In sample testing, 45% of housing stock selected had been subject to an electrical inspection in the last five years, a further 7% had received the inspection but more than five years ago – for the remaining 48% there was no record of any electrical inspections.

In all cases the issues needing addressing were raised as a result of inspections, however there was no evidence of any rectifying actions, moreover in 17% of cases electrical inspection certificates showed that 'overall assessment of the installation' in terms for its suitability for continued use was 'unsatisfactory' meaning issues noted

needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. No record of issues being actioned was available.

Recommendation 8:

All outstanding electrical inspections must be completed and an inspection frequency formally established. Establish a process for recording and monitoring inspection outcomes and ensure these are promptly actioned and evidence of such audit trail is maintained.

Management Response

The recommendation is agreed.

The Council continues to implement the 'rewiring' programme started in June 2018 and aims to complete rewiring of 533 properties by October 2020.

Two separate contractors have been appointed to accelerate the process of undertaking electrical tests where the records of electrical inspections and conditions cannot be found or are over five years old. This will be completed latest by March 2020.

The Council is creating a system to record the new certificates and any 'unsatisfactory' actions identified through this work in order to ensure that all outstanding actions are recorded and completed promptly.

The Council identified that 8 properties had certificates in place that identify 'unsatisfactory' results. The Council appointed consultants to undertake immediate re-inspections to assess the risk which was complete on the 7th November. Works have been scheduled and will be implemented by the end of November 2019.

A new policy for managing electrical safety in Council's housing assets will be prepared as part of the Council's compliance policy framework by April 2020.

Issue 9:

Audit selected a sample of housing blocks to establish if annual fire risk assessments are being completed. The fire risk assessments were completed in all cases, however for 60% the FRA was now overdue since it was last carried out more than a year ago. In all cases reviewed following the FRA some high, medium or immediate priority actions required were noted, however there was no evidence of actions arising being completed following the FRA. It is understood that these are to be picked up as part of a programme of fire safety improvements this year.

Recommendation 9:

All outstanding fire safety risk assessments must be completed and subject to annual review. Establish a process for recording and monitoring assessment outcomes and ensure these are promptly actioned and evidence of such audit trail is maintained.

Management Response

The recommendation is agreed.

The Council has established a Fire Safety Management Working Group comprising officers, councillors and members of tenants' forum which seeks to support the council in the implementation of the Fire Safety policy and oversee tenant engagement.

A fire risk assessment programme is ongoing for purpose built flats and the Council has appointed qualified Fire Risk Assessors in accordance with the NFCC guidance and competency framework to provide specialist advice to the Council on Fire Safety. All inspections have been completed and the Council is working with the consultants to finalise the recommendations and actions by the end of December 2019. Any actions identified from these inspections will be prioritised in accordance with the Council's portfolio management strategy, based on risk profile and informed by the newly-established person based assessments. Significant contained arising from the fire risk assessments will be updates in the accompanying action plan.

The approach to prioritisation and risk management will be shared with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) for information and comment. A contractor has been appointed which will provide the Council with the ability to undertake any works required in a timely fashion minimising any risk to tenants.

Issue 10:

No central record of asbestos checks is maintained and currently no asbestos checks are being undertaken on the housing properties. Audit sample testing revealed that 80% of the properties had been subject to an asbestos survey as some time. However, where recommendations were raised as a result of the surveys there was no evidence of these actions being addressed or re-inspections carried out. There is no system in place that could effectively address and monitor any recommendations made as a result of the surveys or to re-assess properties

Recommendation 10:

All properties must be surveyed in accordance with the Council policy. Those properties without surveys should be inspected as soon as possible. Establish a process for recording and monitoring recommendations resulting from asbestos surveys to ensure these are promptly actioned and evidence of such audit trail is maintained.

Management Response

The recommendation is agreed.

The Council has appointed consultants from a framework to undertake asbestos management surveys for the properties where there are no previous records available by the end of December 2019.

The Council is also undertaking re-inspections for the remaining properties by April 2020 to ensure its records are up-to-date and accurate.

Following the commissioned surveys, a rolling programme of periodic re-inspections for all properties will be put in place with procurement of competent

consultants in accordance with the recommendations from the surveys for regular monitoring of asbestos in housing assets.

Issue 11:

In order to manage performance relating to health and safety inspections, it is good practice to develop key performance indicators that are monitored on a regular basis by management.

Internal audit could not be provided with any evidence of such performance monitoring. There is a risk, therefore, that management may not be aware of any failure to comply with the policies.

Recommendation 11:

KPIs relating to health and safety inspections should be introduced and subject to regular monitoring to provide assurance that all health and safety responsibilities are being fulfilled in accordance with legislation and policy.

Management Response

The recommendation is agreed.

For effective monitoring of compliance, an efficient data collection mechanism is being created with procurement of consultants where necessary to undertake cyclical and periodic checks. To ensure all actions identified through monitoring are actioned in accordance with the risk management strategy, it is proposed to prepare a programme of works over short, medium and long term. Specific performance indicators will be developed to monitor the council performance on compliance going forward and will be reported to Cabinet regularly. The performance indicators will be based on data stored within the asset management database.

3. Update on compliance position as of 11th November 2019

The audit report is based on the review of a small sample of properties during August 2019. Since then a gap analysis of all available information and data has been undertaken for all 1835 properties and the currently available compliance data is being co-ordinated into an accessible and meaningful format with new baseline information. The current position in relation to broader compliance issues is set out below

Electrical safety

In June 2018, a new lifecycle programme of rewiring was commenced and contractors were appointed to carry out electrical tests and re-wiring for 629 council owned properties by October 2020. This work is supported by the appointment of Construction Design and Management (CDM) consultants and asbestos contractors. A total of 533 properties were tested in 2018 and 285 properties have been rewired in the period of July 2018 to September 2019. The Council is in receipt of full electrical certificates for these properties which are valid for the next five years.

The Council does not hold records of electrical inspection condition reports for 376 properties. To address this, an instruction has been issued to the current contractor to undertake electricals tests for these 376 properties. The expected completion date is April 2020. Members should note that the dates specified represent the last date by which the required interventions will be completed.

A further 660 properties have got records of inspection which are over 5 years old. The Council is seeking to appoint further contractors through a framework arrangement to undertake electrical tests for these 660 properties by December 2019. This work will be undertaken in parallel to the works mentioned above in an attempt to accelerate the process.

It should be noted the numbers above reflect the latest position following further data cleansing work undertaken by officers and represent an improved position from that previously represented in the Council report on 4th November. The same applies in terms of the data provided in relation to all other areas of health and safety compliance.

Asbestos Safety

The Council has found that it currently does not have asbestos management surveys for 411 properties. The appointed consultants have started work on site to visit the properties and prepare the management surveys as identified in recommendation 10.

In addition to this, the updated Asbestos Policy and Asbestos Management Plan has been prepared and is being consulted with staff and trade unions with a view to be adopted by the end of November 2019. An updated Asbestos Register is in the process of being compiled as part of the resurvey work.

As part of a comprehensive communications campaign, all tenants have been advised not to undertake any repairs work without contacting the council first. The revised tenancy agreement due to be considered by the Council Cabinet on 27th November for consultation includes this message along with the revised tenants' handbook.

Gas safety

The Council's records show a total of 1353 properties are required to have annual gas safety checks for gas supply, gas installation and gas appliances. The Council is satisfied that there are mechanisms in place to undertake annual checks, service and repairs for gas safety in these properties. Gas safety checks are monitored monthly and are progressing effectively to ensure that none are overdue.

The remaining 482 properties, which are not on the annual rolling programme, are subject to a survey by a contractor appointed by the Council. These survey works are due to be complete by March 2020 and will provide the Council with reassurance that these properties still do not require gas safety checks and/or certificates and ensure its records are up-to-date and accurate.

Water Hygiene

For sheltered schemes, weekly checks (flush through and temperature) are carried out by the respective wardens and the Council is satisfied that sufficient systems are in place for regular checks on an annual basis for all sheltered schemes.

The Council's available data shows that individual flats in purpose built blocks have a direct supply from the mains therefore no checks are required for those.

Additionally, and in order to ensure the Council's records are up-to-date and accurate, the Council is currently surveying all purpose built flats to review and update the database and ensure that no further checks are required. This work will be complete by the end of November 2019.

Fire Safety

The Council has established a Fire Safety Management Working Group comprising officers, councillors and members of tenants' forum which seeks to support the council in the implementation of the Fire Safety policy and oversee tenant engagement.

A fire risk assessment programme is ongoing for purpose built flats and the Council has appointed qualified Fire Risk Assessors in accordance with the NFCC guidance and competency framework to provide specialist advice to the Council on Fire Safety.

All inspections have been completed and the Council has received the new FRAs in October 2019. All actions identified from these inspections are being prioritised based on risk profile and informed by the newly-established person based assessments.

The approach to prioritisation and risk management will be shared with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) for any additional advice and to ensure that all works are prioritised accordingly. A contractor has been appointed which will provide the Council with the ability to undertake any further works required in a timely fashion minimising any risk to tenants.

Lifts Safety

There are four blocks of flats where lifts are installed and the Council have appointed contractors for routine inspection and maintenance of these lifts. In all these locations, 6 visits are carried out per year by the consultants, in accordance with the manufacturer's advice and taking into consideration of the type of use of the building. The Council is reviewing the condition of lifts in order to prioritise actions for their sustained function and use.

4. How did we get here?

As a landlord, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that checks are undertaken in accordance with legislation and that it meets Consumer Standards set by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Council wants to ensure that the safety of its tenants is a paramount consideration and also has an aspiration to deliver high quality homes and housing services.

There are a number of reasons which have contributed to the issues identified in the audit report. Since 2010, a series of restructures have seen the resources deployed to supporting the management and maintenance of council housing rationalised and there has been considerable instability in the team, both in terms of leadership and wider turnover of staff. Over the last 18 months it has become increasingly apparent that there have been significant and long standing challenges in relation to effectively delivering the housing and landlord service. In addition:

- The HRA Business Plan was last published in 2012 and needs to be refreshed
- There has been insufficient planning and resources committed to proactive maintenance projects for some time, with an over reliance on responsive repairs
- the cost and complaints associated with repairs and void properties has been stubbornly high and there has over recent years been very limited proactive management of tenancies, enforcement action and tenancy engagement
- Since 2010, the number of 'non-decent' homes (one of the measures through which housing quality is assessed), has risen steadily from around 1% to 32% in 2018. Since 2018, deterioration has been actively monitored and at the current time the number of non decent homes has reduced to 29%. It should be noted that how we assess the Decent Homes standard is currently under review.
- There has been a lack of clarity and transparency regarding the identified issues over a number of years and it would appear that prior to 2018 there has been limited strategic action taken to address them.
- In relation to the deterioration in the number of 'non-decent' homes, the rolling replacement programme has previously been based upon a lifecycle programme only. It is clear however that the council should incorporate quality and condition of various components within their assessments which were not included before, so as to more effectively understand whether the council's housing stock are meeting the Decent Homes standards.

In the last few years there has been a much sharper focus at a national level on health and safety issues for tenants as a result of recently issued guidance and high profile events. This report addresses identified structural and cultural issues developed over many years and seeks to provide a much greater focus on delivering the best quality houses possible, in order to ensure that residents are safe, and feel safe. A key aim of the actions arising from this report is to ensure Melton Borough

Council provides the best possible landlord services and high quality council homes, and is at the forefront of what the sector has to offer.

Over the past 18 months the Council has re-invested in and focussed on improving long standing issues and underinvestment within the housing and landlord service. Additional resources and a series of actions were approved in June 2018 and again in January 2019. This provided an increase in resources to support tenancy management but also enabled a series of improvement actions specifically in relation to fire safety. In addition, in March 2019 the Senior Leadership Team proactively commissioned this Internal Audit of landlord health and safety in order to obtain a holistic picture which could feed into the Housing Improvement Plan (HIP) and to establish a level of assurance in respect of health and safety compliance and whether it was being effectively managed.

An LGA Governance Review in early 2018 made it clear that leadership, clarity of direction and accountability were significant issues for the council under the previous committee structure. Initial improvements made in May 2018 and ultimately the move to a Cabinet and Scrutiny model from May 2019 has significantly strengthened the Council's ability to grip and focus on the issues that need to be addressed.

The change in governance structure to a Cabinet and Scrutiny model has provided a focus on key areas which means there is greater oversight and accountability from the leadership of the organisation and the Cabinet have made addressing the long standing issues that have been identified within the housing landlord function a key priority and have been working closely with officers to develop this Housing Improvement Plan (HIP).

5. What else are we doing?

The Housing Improvement Plan, approved at Council on 4th November, has been formulated to address some of the landlord and tenant issues that have been identified over the past 18 months including compliance to property safety. Further investigation into the issues has highlighted a need for the Council to address some issues that appear to have developed over a period of 10 years specifically relating to the standard of homes and meeting Consumer Standards. Upon identification of specific issues the Council has responded promptly and diligently to rectify weaknesses and the Housing Improvement Plan shows a significant and continuing commitment to improving standards in housing landlord responsibilities.

The HIP will deliver a significant investment in housing services to address the current issues, ensure compliance with safety requirements and ultimately to deliver a high quality housing service. The governance arrangements proposed will provide even greater focus and scrutiny from the leadership of the organisation as well as receiving external check and challenge to improving the Council's housing stock.

In addition to the actions being taken in response to the recommendation above, the Council has undertaken a range of actions to improve compliance across all areas of property safety in housing assets. The actions set out below provide an update on steps taken so far and actions planned as part of the Housing

Improvement Plan (HIP) that will help mitigating the risks highlighted in the audit report. Combined with the recommendations, they create a comprehensive package of measures with identifiable resource requirements

- Structure and Leadership: The Corporate Restructure report approved by the Employment Committee on 7th November establishes a new, consolidated Housing and Communities directorate and creates the potential for additional housing expertise and capacity at a senior level within the organisation. It establishes a new permanent Housing Asset Manager role to provide clear direction and leadership to the team and improve accountability and responsiveness for housing maintenance functions. The Corporate Committee (January 2019) approved the permanent establishment for the creation of a full time compliance Officer post to oversee the delivery of the Council's responsibilities in relation to all aspects of property safety.
- Data Management: A key finding of this audit has been the historical weaknesses in data collection, retention, management and application in decision making process related to property safety. A central and accessible database is being created to ensure there is sufficient control and coordination of information in relation to the location, condition, compliance, works and repairs log, valuations, service charges and tenancy history. Consultants have been appointed to undertake gap analysis of available information in order to inform the specification for commissioning the next stage of data collection. It is proposed to maximise the use of the current available software in the interim, with a view to consider procuring a new asset management solution with greater functionality in the future, subject to a valid business case. A Data Officer post for an initial 2 year period is created to support this work.
- Housing Asset Management Plan (HAMP): A full stock condition survey as described above will help to inform this work. A stock condition survey sample of 30 properties has been commissioned to enable a specification to be developed for a full stock condition survey and this will provide a clearer picture. This will inform the formation of a Housing Asset Management Plan which will be a key component of the HRA Business Plan. The work on HAMP and HRA Business Plan has been commissioned and is due to be completed by January 2020. This work is critical in understanding the overall financial position of the Housing Revenue Account. Considering the limitations of currently available information for stock condition, this will be reviewed annually to ensure the business plan is relevant and up to date.
- Development of a Planned Maintenance Programme: The data co-ordination work will facilitate the preparation of a comprehensive programme of planned maintenance projects. This programme will be built into the refreshed HRA to ensure it is appropriately costed and clearly greater investment in the Council's current housing stock may reduce the scale of potential investments in new housing projects. Effective management of these projects will require the appointment of qualified personnel with capital programme and project management capability. One full time and one two year fixed term post is created through HIP for the Planned Maintenance Officers. To support the additional work, a legal officer and a finance officer posts are created as well.

- Housing repair and voids: A multidisciplinary team is undertaking a review to assess and revise the void process by working with all relevant stakeholders including a range of contractors. The Scrutiny Committee has approved the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to review Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation. It is proposed to prepare a voids policy, revise voids specification and consider all recommendations from the Scrutiny committee following the review in January 2020. Two fixed term Response Repairs officers posts are created to help with the backlog of works. In addition, one permanent Electrical Officer and one Mechanical Officer posts are created to ensure sufficient expertise and capacity within the team. One permanent Voids Co-ordinator role is created to oversee the improvements being identified through the process review and ensure these are sustained.
- Tenancy management: To build on and accelerate the improvements in proactive tenancy management and increase the levels of engagement and where necessary enforcement, additional resources are required. It is also necessary to ensure that as the Council accelerates its planned maintenance programme to make a step change in housing quality, additional tenancy liaison and support will be required. To facilitate these improvements, one Tenancy Liaison Officer role for two years fixed term is created alongwith two additional housing officer posts to support the housing repairs team in managing the backlog of works. One Tenancy Enforcement Officer post is created in the newly established Regulatory Services team (see Corporate Restructure Report) to support the Housing Officers in taking action as needed.

The current work to review and strengthen the Tenancy Agreements will be completed in November 2019. A review of Rents and Service Charges will be completed by April 2020. A programme of undertaking person based assessments is underway with a view to inform the prioritisation process for works related to property safety and compliance issues.

- Interim resources: To immediately increase capacity and support the extensive programme of compliance works currently being undertaken by the housing assets team, resources from across the organisation have already been redirected. An interim housing asset manager and an interim responsive repair officer have been appointed and started from 28th October 2019. An interim data officer is being appointed with a view to the starting early November.
- Engagement with regulatory authorities: The Council has worked positively with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) over the last 12 months. The Council is engaging proactively with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).
- Governance and Oversight: In light of the compliance issues regarding the council meeting landlord health and safety obligations set out in the report, the Council has referred the position to the Regulator of Social Housing. The Council has also sought advice and support from the Local Government Association (LGA) following the positive transformational work delivered as a result of the Peer Challenge in December 2017 and the Governance Review in March 2018. The Council has invited the LGA to provide further support and it

is proposed that a Housing Improvement Board is established to oversee the delivery of the plan and that this board should include representatives from the LGA and an external critical friend, as well as the political and officer leadership of the Council.

Regular updates will be provided to Cabinet, Council and the Audit and Standards Committee in relation to the required improvements. There will also be regular informal updates through the internal Members Bulletin and all member briefings as necessary.

The revised project management toolkit, programme board arrangements and documentation management system will be rolled out following the restructure in November 2019.